

THE PROMISE OF THE PAST.

"Tis but of fleeting years a score,
Since father used to call—
"My son, 'tis these you got to hold;
Come, say good night to all."
Ah! how unwelcome were the words,
And how they spoiled the fun!
I wasn't tired, why, not a bit!
Our game was not half done.

But time has flown, and I'm a man,
And heavy loads I bear;
For weary the lagging hours
Drag on, held back by care!
Too long, too long are now the days,
And things are different quite;
How gladly would I now respond!
To father's call each night!

Somewhere the thought occurs to me—
That this same voice may hold
When I shall find my race is run,
And life's bright fires grow cold;
May not the somber messenger,
Whom call I now would dread,
Come at the last, a welcome friend,
To bid me to my bed?"

Kansas City Independent.



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CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

"Your brother died three years ago," he said, "and your son was a passenger with me to Prince this winter. He was coming to the mines, he said. He was killed a couple of weeks ago one night when he was coming down to the vessel. Capt. Coffin took charge of the body. It was the day before I left town, and my ticket all bought and couldn't wait for the funeral."

"Did you see the body yourself?"

"No," said the mate, hesitatingly, "but I heard the second mate say he was dead."

"Do you know who did it?"

"No."

"How did it all happen?"

The stalwart miner's voice trembled as he spoke, but he controlled himself by a superhuman effort and Obed Rider replied:

"He was picked up dead on the water front one night. He was on his way down to the vessel and they supposed some one hit him from behind. They went through the poor chap's clothes and left him on the sidewalk, the scoundrels! The second mate found him there the same night long toward morning. I had my ticket on an excursion train that day and I couldn't wait. I had lots to do getting ready."

"Was there no clue to the murderer?"

"No, they said there warn't no chance of ever finding out who done it. No-one was 'round to see the fellow do it, and he got clean off."

"Then you don't know where he was buried?"

"No, but Cap'n Coffin would see that he was taken care of all ship shape and snug."

"Who is this Capt. Coffin?"

"Skipper of the Seabird."

"Was that the craft you came out in?"

The mate replied in the affirmative, and the unhappy father went on:

"God bless him for his big heart if he does that! Money is so object to me now. I've frozen and sweated all these years to get gold, and now I'm alone in the world. You haven't told me how my brother died. When was that?"

The mate gave him all the details, this time truthfully, for he had heard them all at Merville. When he had finished, Capt. Scott said:

"Did you never hear Tom speak of me? Why did he never write? When I left the ship in your charge I gave you a letter to mail to him telling him that I was going up in Alaska after gold, and giving him an address in Seattle where he could write, and now I've got the letter some time. He never wrote as far as I know, or if he did it was never forwarded to me. For over three years I have been buried where no letters could reach me, and now I was on my way to Seattle and then for home. It's an awful blow, Rider!"

The mate was silent, and the stricken man continued:

"What did the owners say when you turned over the vessel and accounts?"

The other's face was pale pale, but he made a great effort, and replied:

"O, it was all right."

"Accounts were all straight?"

Rider's agitation was so great that the other mate had noticed it but for his own great grief, but he managed to say:

"All straight, cap'n."

Tom's father was silent a moment, and Obed Rider's thoughts were anywhere but pleasant. His brain was in a whirl, and he feared that any moment Misfortune might betray him to the man he had wronged so deeply. He was at his wits' end for the best course to pursue, when suddenly his companion settled the matter at once by exclaiming:

"I have only one thing left to live for now! I have more money than I know what to do with, and I'll see that my poor boy is buried properly in Prince. Then I'll do the square thing by everybody that was good to him there and then."

He broke off suddenly and set his teeth hard.

"Then I'll get \$20,000 reward up for the scoundrel who killed him!"

Rider shuddered involuntarily as the captain spoke, but he made no reply. The belt about his waist seemed to failly here; his flesh as the father went on, and he dared not meet the speaker's gaze.

"What will he do if he finds his whip-slayer and hears what I told about his skipping out?" he thought. "He will murder me! I must be out of this before he gets back here, and he will never think of looking for me on the distant trail! Besides, if he's rich the chances

are that they'll go east at once and I can work my little scheme without anyone to hinder me. Perhaps it's the best thing after all that I met him. If the youngster is dead the old man will never hear what I told about him unless he goes to Merville, and he isn't likely to go there now he has no shipping firms to hear it, not if he's rich."

He was beginning to feel more easy in his mind when he was interrupted by Capt. Scott, who said:

"What brought you out here, Rider?"

"I got the gold fever like the rest."

"Going to the Klondike region?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Take my advice and don't. It's on Canadian ground, and you can't do so well. I'll give you a tip that is worth a fortune to you. Go to the Copper river and you won't regret it. I'll give you the lay of the land and a toke to a good charm there who will set you right. How are you fixed for money?"

Rider hesitated. Soundness as he was, he could not find his tongue for a moment in reply, and the miner passed him the trouble by adding:

"Never mind, Rider, I see how it is, but you needn't be huffy. I'll see that you have enough to start in with the best of them. A good outfit is half the battle up there, and you want all the grub you can take in. I'm going to make a rush for that steamer now because I get left. I'll see you again if there is time before the boat leaves. I guess my partner will go, too."

He wrung Rider's hand heartily, disappeared into his tent, and came out with a plump bag of gold, which he held by Rider's side without further comment, then started for the beach with long, swinging strides, that took him to the water's edge in very few moments, while the mate looked at the long with glistening eyes and said to himself:

"Now," concluded Tom, "that's the whole story. It may be a wild gold chase, but there it is. Will you go in with me and share and share alike? I know the papers by heart, and you are probably lost, so we will be all right. What do you say?"

"Say? Why, what would any man say? I'm with you as long as I have a drop of blood left! Of course I'll go, but I have larger little men—"

"Don't talk money to me," interrupted Tom, quickly. "I know what you did for me before you knew I had a cent. I have \$100 left, and the first thing is for you to take half of it. I'll feel safer then."

"Don't you think anyone knew you had these papers?" asked his new comrade after awhile. "Sure you never mentioned them or showed them?"

"Sure," replied Tom. "I did not mention them to a single person, and they

have taken your money out of your pocket and lit out. He wouldn't have took no chance hunting for a belt unless he knew there was one there. I see it must be some one that knew of the papers, and then the rest was easy. Now come down aboard and we'll see if we can't prove it."

Tom followed him to the seabird, and they soon stood in the mate's state-room.

"See here!"

The second officer pointed as he spoke to a narrow crevise in the partition which separated it from Tom's room. It needed but a glance to show that it had been recently enlarged.

"That's what did the business," he continued, "and he's off for that gold mine. He's got a big start, and what's to prevent his passing himself off as Mr. Tom Scott on those people?"

"He couldn't do that!" exclaimed Tom.

"Why not? Was there any description of you in the paper the old man gave you? How are they to know?"

"But I've got a statement in my pocket from Capt. Coffin, telling who we are, and all about it!" insisted Tom.

"What good is that when the mate is on the spot, perhaps, with his documents, and how can you make anyone believe you are the right chap? Look here, Scott, there's only one thing to do. We've got to go after that son of a sea cook, and take the law in our own hands. Something will turn up to help us out. After all, I don't know but that there is something in what you say. All he could tell about Avery was what he saw on board the vessel. He never talked any with him, and don't know anything about his family or business. Now, I dare say the old chap told you a good many things about himself, didn't he?"

"Say?" replied Tom, eagerly, "he told me all about his family, and I can soon convince anyone that the mate is lying if he claims to be me. I've got the captain's statement, you know, sworn to before a justice of the peace, and all witness. The mate will have a hard time to get round that."

"Mebbe so," was the doubtful reply, "but it's a wild country where we're going, and I don't believe papers will be of much account there. We're two to one, anyhow, and if we overhaul the rascal we shall find some way to get square with him."

"The sooner we start the better, then," decided Tom. "Come on, let's be off, and see about it at once."

It did not take the two friends long to make their simple preparations. The money remaining in the captain's safe was equally divided between them and worn in belts. Tickets to Seattle were procured, and the following day, after a hearty farewell to the big-hearted skipper, the two young men started on their adventurous trip.

[To be continued.]

AN HONEST PAIR.

When Their Engagement Was Broken Proper Restoration Was Quickly Made.

"Faint everybody that's got such right feelings as Sally Potter and her man; I will say that for the Potters, even if our families aren't going to be connected, after all." Mrs. Roberts was speaking to her next-door neighbor, Miss Elizabeth Sprawle.

"They're honest as the day is long," said Miss Sprawle, "and I only hope your Ned will find another girl as good as Sally."

"There's not a mite of hard feeling between Ned and Sally," answered Mrs. Roberts; "they're good friends still, only they see they made a mistake getting engaged. They were too young to know their own minds, and Mrs. Potter and I both take blame that we didn't counsel them to wait. But that isn't what I was going to tell you. You recall that sprigged-meadow dress pattern that Ned gave Sally when the engagement came out?"

Miss Sprawle nodded assent.

"Well," continued Mrs. Roberts, "it being so hot and summer, Sally had to make up and wear it, as you probably know, but not enough so but what she would have given excellent wear this year if they'd been married. Well, as soon as Sally and Ned decided to break off, Mrs. Potter came over, and nothing would do but I should tell her just what the material cost!

"I hated to, but she would have it, and at last I told her Ned paid six dollars for it; and to-day Sally brought over the money in an envelope, and there was not only the six dollars, but 25 cents interest for the year!"

"I told Sally that there weren't many folks that would have thought of paying six per cent. interest in such a case, but she was real surprised, and said 'twas only what was right. Now what do you think of that?"

"Now never'll find another such, I'm afraid," said Miss Sprawle, and Mrs. Roberts agreed with her. —*Youth's Companion.*

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